McGovern 'observer' still undecided who to vote for

By CARL P. LEUBSDORE

Albuquerque, N.M. (AP) — A 43-year-old Chicago area credit manager, picked as a typical "middle American" for a study of voting behavior, says he still doesn't know how he will vote after a rare, inside view of Sen. George McGovern's presidential campaign.

"To be frank," Richard J. Johnson said in an interview, "I'm still undecided at this point whether he'll get my vote in November." But he said his view of McGovern has gone up from a week of close watching.

JOHNSON was picked by the Public Broadcasting Corp.'s National Public Affairs Center for Television PACT for a year-long study. He was first interviewed in January, when he described himself as a Democrat who might vote in November for President Nixon.

"I feel that he's done a commendable job," Johnson said at the time. But he added that if Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts won the Democratic nomination, he'd certainly vote for him.

RICHARD JOHNSON
"Still Undecided"

Married and the father of four, Johnson lives in Rolling Meadows, Ill., drives 21 miles each day to his job with National Steel Service Center Inc. in Evanston and is concerned that his income of about $15,000, including his wife's part-time job, won't be enough to pay for his children's college education.

LAST WEEK, he arrived in Los Angeles to see the McGovern campaign first hand. Since Wednesday, he has seen the senator campaign there, in San Diego; in Dallas and Houston, Tex.; in Peoria and Rockford, Ill.; in Superior, Wis.; and in Des Moines, Iowa.

"It's been strenuous," Johnson conceded. "I'm tired at night, and I'm ready for the old sack, but what an experience."

As for McGovern, Johnson said his first conclusion was that "the candidate has to be an extraordinary human being to endure the rigors of this." He likes a lot of what McGovern has said, finds him "a very congenial, honest and religious man" but still has doubts.

"I would like to see him a little more dynamic in his speeches, in his presentations," Johnson said. He feels Nixon has those qualities, plus the experience of four years in office and adds that "in the last year, there has been improvement in this country economy-wise."

ANOTHER thing that bothers Johnson about McGovern is a feeling "there is a lot of indecision here." He is upset at McGovern's decision to drop Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton as his running mate after disclosure of the Missouri senator's medical history, saying he "definitely" should have been retained.

He has no opinion on Sargent Shriver, who replaced Eagleton and says he is uninfluenced by the fact that he is Kennedy's brother-in-law. He thinks Vice President Spiro T. Agnew "has done a good job."

On Sept. 20, public broadcasting stations will carry a followup program to the earlier show, this one on Johnson's week with the McGovern campaign.